



# HIGH MACH

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A little boy climbs in the cockpit and admires all the gadgets and gears of one of the military helicopters on display at the Wings of Freedom Air Show. (Photo by Gary Barton)

## Wings of Freedom Air Show proves exciting for visitors

The estimated 50,000 spectators who attended the Saturday performance of the Wings of Freedom Air Show enjoyed some of the best aerobatic performances, flying demonstrations and static displays among today and yesterday's military and civilian aircraft.

With temperatures in the upper 80s, the skies were bright and blue as more than 15 acts performed in the air show celebrating the 55th anniversary of AEDC and honoring veterans.

Headlining the show was the Trojan Horsemen T-28 Warbird Aerobatic Team, the only six-ship T-28 war bird formation and

aerobatic demo team in the U.S. Other acts included Tora, Tora, Tora which feature six replica Japanese Zero fighters recreating the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Patty Wagstaff, one of the top female aerobatic pilots in the world; and the Red Eagle Team, as well as the East Coast F-15 and F-16 demo teams.

Spectators had an opportunity to board several static displays including the "Diamond Lil," one of only two flying World War II B-24 Liberators, Bombers and a C-130 Hercules, as well as sit in the cockpit of the Canadian CF-18. The Air Force Nextel Cup car and Orange County Chopper-designed motorcycle proved to be crowd favorites as

did the pedal planes sponsored by Stepping Stones to Aviation.

Although Sunday began promising, Mother Nature had her own agenda for the day's show. About 15 minutes before the start of Sunday's show, a storm with strong winds, rain and hail pelted the airport. The winds, clocked at 72 mph, destroyed several tents, blew over the portable toilets and sent trash and debris flying across the airfield.

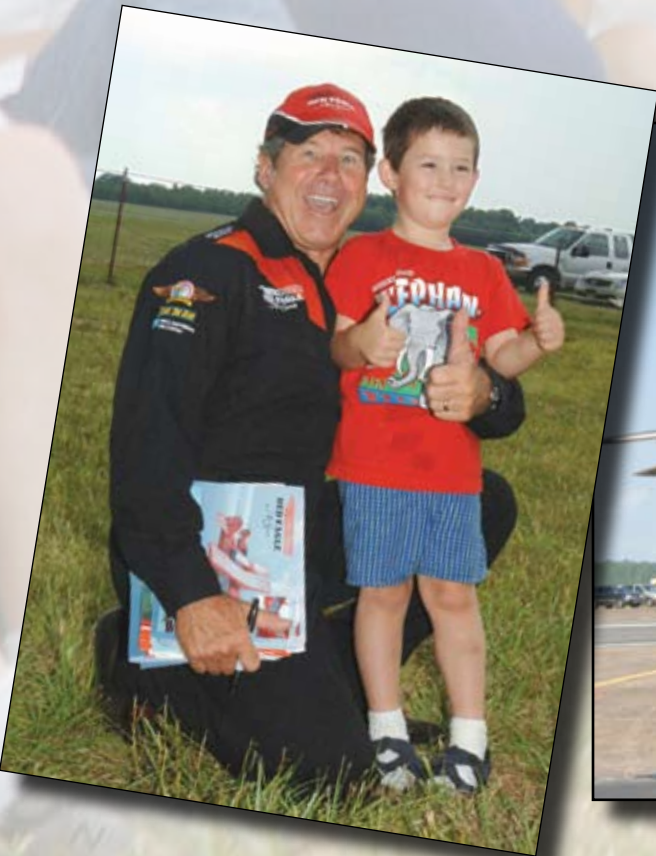
Despite the fact that the show was advertised to take place "rain or shine," the second day of the show was canceled due to the intensity of the storm. A second storm, which also had the potential for high winds

and additional hail, was showing on radar to be closely following the first storm. AEDC Commander Brig. Gen. David Stringer, emergency management personnel and members of the Tullahoma Airport Authority made the decision to cancel the show rather than taking the chance of someone getting hurt or having an aircraft sustain damage from hail or ingesting debris blowing around the airfield.

Luckily, no one suffered major injuries during the first storm.

The air show was presented by AEDC and the Tennessee Regional Air Show Coalition, made up of chambers of commerce from Manchester and Tullahoma.



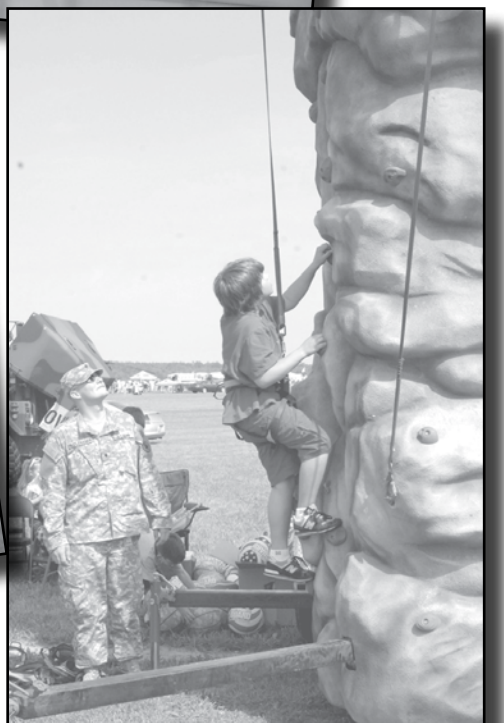






Air show photographs taken by Gary Barton, David Housch, Philip Lorenz III and Claude Morse.





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